

# The Republican.

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## A LEADER.

WHAT shall I write about? In this most important of all epochs there is actually nothing stirring! Here am I with three pages to fill up in three quarters of an hour and nothing to say!

The French and the Spaniards are shut up in a corner, and unless the latter hold out better at Cadiz than at Corunna, I could wish the whole of that corner to sink into the sea, and the rock of Gibraltar with it. But this is all idle speculation. There are some good men among the Spaniards, though far from being all good. Ignorance is the vice that corrupts them. The mass know nothing; and where such is the case, human life is of no more value than any other the most useless kind of animal life. Immortal souls have they? If I thought so, and also thought the future was still to be a resemblance of the present and the past, I should pray for, or wish for, annihilation. Any thing is preferable to an association with the major part of existing animal life.

We must get rid of that dreadful evil—the Priests. Liberty is a burlesque, to be talked of in that society, where one Priest can thrive.

Kingcraft is comparatively harmless when compared with Priestcraft. The chains which gall the body are not so injurious to that body as the chains which prevent the expansion the roving of the mind.

Every thing that roots up prejudices and destroys opinions must be good: and why? Because opinions founded in truth and things demonstrable cannot be destroyed.

It is thus the invasion of Spain at this moment will do great good. The mass of animal life there was almost past improvement: and where that is the case, the more there is destroyed the better.

War between Russia and Turkey would also do an im-

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mense deal of good, if it was merely from the lessening of the amount of the worst part of animal life, that the better part may acquire more power.

Time, patience, and perseverance in right doing, by the greatest possible number, can alone improve the condition of the human race. Plans, schemes, projections, inventions, systems, all are nothing in relation to the whole of the human race. You cannot invent machinery to improve the quality of animal life, because you cannot increase moral power by machinery other than as a trivial auxiliary aid.

Mr. Owen may benefit a thousand, but he can do nothing with the million: and unless there be a thousand Mr. Owens, the nine hundred and ninety nine thousand must be subject to the slow process of natural improvement.

Next week, I will see what I can do with the Methodists; these modern Roman Catholics.

How perfectly consistent for Butterworth and Wilberforce to refuse all concession to the claims of the Catholics! Why so: they are all Christians alike? Yes, but all Christians are at war and have been constantly at war from the commencement of Christianity. Christianity is a system of profit attainable by dint of influence and not labour; and the sect that is uppermost very naturally strives to keep down all others. None are better than the other when the same amount of influence is held; and there will be no peace among mankind, so long as they cherish any thing called religion. How so? Because religion knows no truth: because no man who talks about true religion knows any thing about what he talks: because religion means nothing more than human power misapplied—used to rob and oppress the more useful part of mankind, whose time is so well occupied as to leave no opportunity to enquire into the impositions practised upon them. Lamentable is the fact: but it is as true as lamentable. And the poor animals are influenced to abuse and destroy the very persons who would instruct and relieve them.

The priests shun me and my invitation, and offer to meet them, just as a thief shuns a constable! Would this be the case if they were not certain that I am right and that they are wrong? Had there been a priest living, who felt conscious that he could have convinced me of error, I should never have been in a Gaol, I should have never even been prosecuted. He would have followed me the moment I opposed his creed or his dogmas, and never have left me



until he had completely put me down by reason or ridicule: for priests have veins of ridicule: priests can be sarcastic and satirical; priests can do every thing that every other man can do, and many things which other men cannot do; and which none but priests can do, that is—TO PREACH WHEN THEY FEEL THAT THEY ARE PREACHING FALSEHOOD, IN THE NAME OF ALMIGHTY POWER.

R. CARLILE.

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TO MR. R. CARLILE, DORCHESTER GAOL.

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SIR,

London, August 18, 1823.

YOUR correspondent I. G. having expressed himself a stranger to the term mineral life, I will endeavour to throw a little light upon the subject, according to my view of it, and in doing so, I shall continue to combat the notion he entertains, that an almighty *designing* power, is required to produce the principle of life.

In common parlance, the word life, is applied only to whatever is animate, sensitive, and reasoning, but naturalists, men of science, and philosophers, extend the meaning to other parts of the productions of nature, of which I. G. seems aware, when he declares, that he can imagine what is meant by vegetable life; if from this declaration, we may suppose that I. G. admits of the property of life in plants; I presume he admits it upon the principle of the powers, which reside in them (conjointly with the elements) of production and reproduction, from seeds, bulbs, roots, buds, &c.; if so, it must be allowed, also, to exist from the properties they possess of increasing in magnitude; in fact, their growth constitutes their *vis vitæ*, their force or power of life; if then we allow of the property of the term *life*, as applied to vegetable matter, in a state of growth, and can shew, that minerals also possess the property of growth, of extending their bulk or surfaces; the term life cannot be misapplied as it respects mineral matter, so long as it is in a state of growth.

The principle of the production of animal life, has been copiously discussed in the works of numerous authors, as have the properties of vegetable productions, and perhaps by none more minutely, than by Dr. Darwin, in his Botanic garden; wherein he traced their *sexual* properties of production and reproduction, and of generating male and female; which may hereafter become the more important discovery, by some other great genius, of the primary cause of the *vis vitæ*, the *primum mobile*, or basis of the vivifying principle in matter, animate, inanimate, and sensitive.

In what I have to say upon the subject of mineral life, I beg to state, that I speak of it with the greatest diffidence, because I

have not yet met with any individuals or writers, that carry their ideas so far upon it as I do; because they were the result of my own observations and reflections; and because they require the stamp of ages, of experience, or of some peculiar or accidental confirmatory circumstance to be established.

In opening into a bed of gravel, which probably for many thousand years had remained undisturbed, I have observed, that not only the smaller pebbles, but also the larger stones, have been incrustated with matter of the same homogenous quality, or appearance, which composed the skin, or the surface, of the stone, which appeared, not only to the naked eye, but more clearly through a magnifying lens, to be in my opinion in a state of growth, from which I concluded, that there must have been the principle of the *vis vitæ* in the parent stone, and that when these granulations had acquired the same properties inherently contained in the parent, and were of ripe age, that they would be cast or would fall off, and by the same inherent properties which were contained in the mother stone, if not disturbed, injured, or molested, would increase in magnitude till they had arrived at their full age, or till they were impeded in their growth by some adventitious circumstance, or natural event, sufficiently powerful to overthrow the inherent property of their nature, to increase in size. And I was confirmed in this opinion from having accidentally met with a gravel stone, or pebble, picked up by one of my family, in my presence, in the romantic grounds at Ackfall, near Ripon in Yorkshire, which in its shape resembled a half moon, with the horns brought near together, and which clasped, and held tight, another stone or flint of a different quality, harder in texture or substance, from which it was evident, that the gravel, or pebble, must, at some period of time, have been in a state of growth or granulation, for to me it appeared, that upon no other principle, (except the petrifactive principle, and that we do not admit of in beds of gravel, because we never find any other matter petrified therein,) I say it appeared to me, that by no other principle than that the pebble found must once have been in a growing state could it have formed itself around the flint-stone, it could not have proceeded from any art which mankind possess; and it is too much to believe, or admit, that any supernatural, almighty *designing* power, had effected or ordained the process; to believe that a power profoundly sublime, could be so triflingly employed, would be to stretch our faith to an absurdity, and beyond all decency of respect, for a supposed almighty supreme divinity.

I have also observed in beds of flints, that the flints have been incrustated with chalky matter, and as they are found of all sizes from very small to very large ones, I concluded that they were also once in a state of growth, and that the chalky matter succoured and nurtured them, without the vivifying property of which I supposed they could not increase in size. As a farther confirma-



tion of my opinion respecting the growth of stones and flints, I have now in my possession a globular flint stone, picked up by my youngest son, in company with one of his sisters, which flint he broke in throwing at others, in the centre, or nearly in the centre, of which, is a granite pebble also split in two, which clearly proves, that the flint must have formed, or *grown* round the pebble, by some of the processes of nature; for it is too whimsical to suppose that an almighty *designing* power, could have employed or amused itself in making, or creating, a flint stone, with a particle of granite in its bowels or substance.

I now carry my ideas of mineral life still farther, I am also, I consider, warranted in believing, not only that stones and minerals have their time of birth but also of death. For lately in examining a clay pit in the high ground leading from Bagnigge Wells to Islington, London, I observed several feet down into the clay, a vein of stones—some of which were as hard, or nearly as hard, as flint stones, and when broke into, had every appearance of flints being laminated as flints are frequently known to be—others were not so hard, and others were so soft, that I could thrust the point of my cane through them; from which I concluded, that at some period of time, the clay pit, had once been a bed of flints; but from some convulsion or revolution of nature, being deprived of the nourishing properties of the calcarious or chalky matter, which once surrounded them, this matter being by some process converted to clay, (as it is known, that the lime thrown by farmers on their land, in process of time will be) being thus deprived I say of the *vis vitæ*, the force or property of life, the bed of flints gradually changed into a bed of clay, first the chalky matter and afterwards the flints themselves perished, which inclined me farther to conclude, that clay is no more than the *terra silicium lapidis mortuum*, or the dead earth of flint stones, (as several fossils are of shells, &c., as is evident in the lime stone, or brown marble; obtained from the mountains of Cauldon-low, (near Ashbourne Derbyshire) as well as in other mountainous countries, in which the shells of innumerable marine animals retain their original appearance). Hence we may also conclude that stones or minerals, possess the properties of production and reproduction, the same as the animal world, not that we can suppose that they possess sexual organs, but that they are vivified and revived by the processes which are constantly going forward in elementary matter\*.

As a further illustration of this opinion, I beg to relate the phenomenon of the clay, in some parts of the South West coast of England, which is washed in small pieces by the surge of the sea, on a steep shore, which rolling down, acquire round or globular

\* This does not appear, unless we apply the term *life* to the chemical properties of matter: which instantly makes the word *Life* to be synonymous with *Matter and Motion*.

forms, as are seen in large cobbles for paving the streets of large towns, and some parts of London—these remain for a little time soft, but from the properties of the marine element, and the action of the sun's rays, gradually become hard, and assume the appearance of flint stones, but wanting the chalky matter, they remain *quoad statim*, till by some other circumstance or operation, the elements supply the deficiency; or until in the course of ages, they acquire it, from the properties, which may be contained in the watery element, in which they become immersed or which periodically washes them.

I have heard that in the midst of a large block of stone which was split or sawed in two, was discovered a live toad; improbable, as this may appear, it seems that it was well attested. If it was a fact, it exhibited a double phenomenon of nature, first the formation or *growth* of the stone around the toad, secondly the very small quantity of air and moisture required to sustain life; indeed a third phenomenon presents itself, namely, the inculcable age of the reptile, which we must suppose (from being a cold-blooded animal) was preserved in consequence of the extreme purity the air and moisture had acquired, in passing through the pores of the stone.—I believe, there are accounts on record of other reptiles, having been discovered in similar situations to the toad above described, but not coming under my own observation, and being phenomena, so extraordinary, I do not intend to insist upon them, as corroborative demonstrations of my opinion as to the growth of stones; the other circumstances in my opinion, being sufficiently confirmatory of the *growth* of mineral matter; which I presume is what you mean by mineral life—for certainly there must be a property of life, the *vis vitæ* in stones before they could grow. Should any of the disbelievers in the powers or properties of nature to produce life be disposed to ridicule the idea, on account of the intense coldness, and extreme hardness or density of stones, Materialsists can repel the shafts, by the impenetrable shield of truth. The circumstance of the great coldness which surrounds and exists in stones, can be no refutation of the argument, that minerals possess a principle of life, for we know from the properties of some parts of animal life, that though numerous animals could not exist without warm blood, which “is the life thereof”—nevertheless, there are also numerous animals, in which warm blood is totally absent, from which naturalists, denominate them cold-blooded animals; these are as cold or nearly as cold, to the human touch, as pebble or flint-stones and yet many of them are as powerful or vigorous, or more powerful or more vigorous, as active or more active than many of the warm-blooded animals; the alligator, boa-constrictor, and other of the serpent, some of the reptile, and many of the finny tribe may be adduced in support of the argument, that coldness is no reason why stones should not grow. Numerous plants, particularly the aquatic plants might



also be referred to as being intensely cold during the time of their growth; should sceptics or infidels, (for unbelief is all that is properly meant by infidelism) should the unbelievers in the primary properties and powers of life contained in nature, raise an objection, on account of the want of impenetrable density, in the substance of the cold-blooded animals and plants, I have referred to, and should be desirous to throw another shaft at Materialists, the latter have it in their power to ward off the blow when they refer the sceptics to the towering rocks of coral, which too fatally, have convinced, many of the hardy sons of Neptune, of their impenetrable properties; and yet naturalists know that these were once, and at their base—up to the surface of the briny deep, still are, an immense congeries of living matter; do these proceed from the the *design* of an almighty artificer, or are they simply part of the (still unknown) operations of the elements; were they produced by spontaneous vitality or did a God infuse into them the spirit of life?

I have had it also related to me (but too loosely to advance as positive evidence in support of my opinion of the growth of mineral matter) that the coal mines after having been worked and left untouched many years or ages, have been found to be grown up again with coal; not having seen this phenomenon myself, and from my opinion, that after the atmospherical or external air, has been freely admitted into the beds or wombs of minerals; that the fructifying, or productive process ceases; I have not yet brought my mind, to give credence to the statement, and believe it proceeded from some error of the party in his observation of the supposed reproduction of the mineral or fossil matter, which he alluded to. Certainly if it could be ascertained, that several ages ago, a coal mine had been worked, and being left undisturbed, it had again become completely filled up with the same matter, our doubts must give way to fact—and the facts might be, and ought then to be admitted as corroborative evidence of the inherent principle of the *vis vitæ* which resides in mineral matter; but true philosophy disclaims all speculations, built upon any hypothesis, however plausible, not founded upon observation, the test of experience or not demonstrable, upon the principles of analogy and science; therefore we must leave the subject of the growth of the fossil contained in great abundance in coal mines, to be decided by future observations.

But having myself descended far down (some hundred feet) into the bowels of the earth; and having at the lowest depth (that I have gone) observed the granulating process, imagining what I beheld at that depth, was in a state of growth; I have carried my speculations, so far, as to imagine from analogy “with modesty enough and likelihood to lead it” that the whole substance of the earth, (except the *terra mortuum*) is in a state of growth, and the whole, in a state of composition, decomposition or recompo-

sition, for motion is the life of matter, it matters not how slowly or imperceptibly to the limited observation of the short lived being—man; for what untaught and inexperienced child could imagine, that in putting an acorn into the earth, it would sprout up, and after seeing it peep above the surface of the earth, that it would become in two hundred years, a far spreading and lofty tree; or after having seen an oak hewn down, and placed as a main beam in some gorgeous temple, that it would be a thousand years in decaying; and when told that the process of growth, in the first instance, and that of decay, in the latter, was during those long periods regularly going forward; what ignorant or inexperienced person, or child, could believe the fact—yet experience has confirmed it. The very chair on which a philosopher sits contemplating the wonders of nature, is during his meditation, undergoing the process of decay or decomposition; though imperceptible at the moment.

Since reading Mr. Mackey's learned publication upon the theory of time, wherein he accounts for the world's duration for eight periods of twenty-five thousand years; and from the revolutions of the planetary system, by the aid of his astronomical apparatus, his PERAMBOURANIUM, and the signs of the zodiac, he concludes, that he will be able to account for its existence two millions of years at least. I am more than ever confirmed, in my opinion, of the eternal existence of matter, and of the constant process that is going on, in the composition, decomposition, and recomposition of its various and elementary parts.

If then we can, by the aid of science, get to account for such immense periods of time, it is not too much to suppose, that the processes of production may be going forward in the bowels or womb of the earth, for ten times ten thousand years, till it arrives at a state of decrepitude, to be renovated again, by other processes, which lead on to youthful vigour, and the acme of power. Allowing, as we do, to the planets an incalculable or unbounded space to revolve in; why shall we limit them to duration of time to revolve in; why shall we not allow the powers of fecundity, to go on for millions of years, unimpeded, but by the inherent properties, which reside in the elements of decomposition.

What would a person think, who had never lent his mind, to contemplate the wonders of the "starry heavens"—on being told, that a little twinkling light, which on a serene winter's eve he beholds hanging he knows how, in the blue ethereal expanse, was at the astonishing distance, of fifty-four billions two hundred and twenty-four thousand millions of miles from him, as Sirius is supposed to be from the earth, would not such a person be astounded, and overpowered with the thought of the incalculable and illimitable immensity of space; just so may those be astonished, who for the first time, reflect upon the prolific properties of matter, the *animus terra* and the growth of worlds.



Should theologians and theists exclaim; "what! Is this the man who denounces us as *visionaries*; behold the visionary *hypothesis* of a Materialist!!!" To such I would reply, I have *matter* to found it upon. Yes, all the elements of matter with all the affinities, changes and modifications the elements are capable of; I have boundless space for the operations of the elements to work in, and I have everlasting duration of time for the operations to be going on—to Christian theologians, I would say, and is not my hypothesis, infinitely more grand and glorious than yours, that commences creation but six thousand years ago, and in a few thousand years more, assumes that all "shall dissolve and like (*indeed*) the baseless fabric of a vision leave not a rack\* behind."

But let us hear what one of their own philosophers says, who has not only charmed the world with the harmony of his numbers, but has edified it, with his erudition, his scientific researches, and his astonishing developement of the laws and operations of nature—who with all his profound *reasoning* upon those laws (which in *effect* attributes "the CAUSE of CAUSES," to the operations of elementary matter) is pleased to call in question the inconsistency of Atheists who by the force of the same reasoning shew that their can be no such being as the visionaries hold up to their own terror.

"Hear O ye sons of time! Your final doom,  
And read the characters, that mark your tomb:  
The marble mountains, and the sparry steep—431.  
Were built by myriad nations of the deep,  
Age after age, who form'd their spiral shells,  
Their sea-fun gardens, and their coral cells;  
Till central fires with unextinguished sway  
Raised the primeval islands into day;  
The sand-fill'd strata, stretched from pole to pole;  
Unmeasured beds of clay, and marl, and coal,  
Black ore of manganese; zinky stone,  
And dusky steel, on his magnetic throne;  
In deep morass of eminence superb,  
Rose from the WRECS of animal or herb;  
These from the elements by life combined,  
Form'd by digestion, and in glands refined,  
Gave by their just excitement of the sense  
The BLISS OF BEING, to the vital ENS.

Thus the tall mountains, that emboss the lands,  
Huge isles of rock, and continents of sands  
Whose dim extent, eludes the enquiring sight,  
ARE MIGHTY MONUMENTS OF PAST DELIGHT;  
Shout round the globe, how reproduction strives,  
With vanquish'd death,—and happiness survives;

\* I have heard this word of our immortal bards frequently criticized, most persons reading it *wreck* (destruction) but looking at the contest of the sublime language used—commencing with "The Cloud capt Towers," the beauty and sublimity is increased, in supposing that at that awful time, not a *rack*, a stream of a *cloud* shall be left behind.

How low life increasing, peoples every clime,—453.  
And young *renascent* NATURE conquers TIME.

DARWIN.

Here we have in the poetic effusions of a Christian theologian, and a man of deep research into the laws and operations of nature, one well skilled in science an avowal that the powers are sufficient by her elementary processes to the reproduction and restitution of matter; and of reproducing life "*from the wrecks of animal or herb.*"

We also have an extraordinary evidence, of the force of early impression, and the influence of religious hallucinations; in perverting the judgement of one of the most learned of mankind; for while Darwin, with a masterly hand, describes the astonishing powers of nature, renders the processes of resuscitation, and spontaneous vitality familiar to us, shews, that properties contained in elementary matter, are capable of carrying forward the most profound operations of producing the most stupendous effects, he is still influenced by the prevailing dogmas of the day and concludes, contrary to his own reasoning that "nature conquers time;" and in compliance with the prejudices of the religious world, to assign to a fabled idol a controuling power above nature.

"—And high in golden characters record  
The immense munificence of NATURE'S LORD."

DARWIN.

Should any of the Christian visionaries suppose that Darwin, in the foregoing stanza's, was carried away, by his poetic fire, to attribute too much to the powers of nature, we will see what he says upon the subject, in the cool and collected language of prose—in his comments upon his own ideas expected in poetry.

"*The marble mountain, line 431.*—From the increased knowledge in geology during the present century, owing to the greater attention of philosophers to the situations of the different materials which compose the strata of the earth, as well as to their chemical properties, it seems clearly to appear, that the nucleus of the globe, beneath the ocean, consists of granite; and that on this, the great beds of limestone, were formed from the shells of marine animals during the *innumerable primeval ages* of THE WORLD; and that whatever strata lie on these beds of limestone, or on the granite, (where the limestone does not cover it) were formed after the elevation of islands and continents, above the surface of the sea, by the recrements of vegetables and of terrestrial animals." Though this may by Christian visionaries be considered too speculative, as being contrary to the description given in their oracles, of the creation of the world; all scientific men, who have "swept from their mind," the prejudices and superstition arising from early education, and the dogmas of priests, will acknowledge,



that it accords with the principles of science, and is corroborated by repeated observations, of men of science, upon the operations of nature.

As a farther demonstration, how far science will carry men of enlarged and reflecting minds, beyond the confined limits prescribed by the narrow-minded ignorant priests of all religions, as a confirmation of the opinions I have expressed, in the three letters I have written in answer to I. G.'s notion of an almighty *designing* power being required to produce animal life, and in support of my opinion of the growth of worlds, I beg to lay before your readers the following comment of Dr. Darwin's upon part of the same stanzas:—

"*How life increasing*, line 453. Not only the vast calcareous provinces which form so great a part of the terraqueous globe, and also whatever rests upon them, as clay, marl, sand, and coal, were formed from the fluid-elements of heat, oxygen, azote, and hydrogen, along with carbon, phosphorus, and perhaps a few other substances, which the science of chemistry has not yet decomposed; and gave the pleasure of life to the animals and vegetables which formed them; and thus constitute monuments of the past happiness of those organized beings. But as those *remains of former life* are not again totally decomposed, or converted into their original elements, they supply more copious food to the succession of new animal or vegetable beings on their surface; which consists of materials convertible into nutriment, with less labour or activity of the digestive powers; and hence the quantity or number of organized bodies, and their improvement in size, as well as their happiness, has been *continually increasing* along with the SOLID PARTS OF THE GLOBE; and will probably continue to increase, till the whole terraqueous sphere, and all that inhabit it shall dissolve by a general conflagration, and be again reduced to their elements.

"Thus all the suns and the planets, which circle round them, may again sink into one central chaos; and may again, by explosion, produce a new world; which in process of time, may resemble the present one, and at length undergo the same catastrophe!"

And the religious philosopher concludes his speculations by saying, that "these great events may be the result of the immutable laws impressed on matter by the Great Cause of Causes, Parent of Parents, Ens Entium!"

But in supposing that *the great events* have taken place as he describes, he opposes the dogmas of all the priests and theologians that ever existed—if we except TOTH the Phœnician who became King of Egypt, broached a new religion, and made his God, to rise from the mud of chaos, as Darwin accounts in several instances for the spontaneous productions of animal life—thus making them as Moses made his God and angels material beings.

Had I had to have written the concluding paragraph of Darwin's scientific speculations, my words would have been as follows:—these great events may be the result of the immutable properties, residing in the elements of matter—which work together for the production, reproduction, succour, and support of all things that exist.

I repeat that I offer my opinion upon the growth of worlds with considerable diffidence, from its being held by many Materialists that matter can never be increased or diminished in quantity, which my idea of the growth of matter, seems to controvert, though in fact, I mean no such thing, as my admission of the composition, decomposition, and recombination, of matter clearly shews; it is only a change of the form, shape, or mould, of substance, from density to liquidity, or hardness to softness that takes place, and not an entire annihilation, or a totally new production of a particle of matter. **ELEMENTARY MATTER** combined with the actions of the elements, is **NATURE**; and **NATURE** is **ETERNAL**, **INDESTRUCTIBLE**, and **PERPETUAL IN MOTION**; without nature or elements no God can exist, hence it is contrary to reason, and the principles of science, in Darwin to talk of “the immense munificence of **NATURE'S LORD!**” as it respects the productions of nature; because the minor could not create the major—for according to his own shewing, in the elements and actions of the elements, reside the principles of life—the *vis vitæ* of a God or an insect: hence **TOTH** who made his God to rise from mud, was more consistent than the Christian theologians of the present day, who say their God, (after the example of Pythagoras) is a spirit, immaterial and without parts; although the author or supposed author of the Jew Book, expressly represents his God a material being like ourselves, both in parts and passions. “Speaking unto Moses face to face as a man speaketh unto his friend”—saying unto him “let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot, and that I may consume them.” A strange expression from a being said to be omniscient and omni-beneficent: and strange that he should be represented to be speaking face to face with Moses as a man speaketh unto his friend. At the eleventh verse of the 33d chapter of Exodus, and yet at the 20th verse of the same chapter he is made to say, “Thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me and live.” Let any unprejudiced man read this, and the remainder of the chapter, and, if he possesses common sense, and does not see through the whole deception, he must be far gone indeed in superstition: for my part I never read this tale but I fancy it must have been the production of some wag, to see how far the stupidity and credulity of mankind will suffer them to be imposed upon.

I believe that not until the principles promulgated by the Pythagoreans of God being a spirit, had long been known to the Pagan idolators, was it received by any part of the Jews, true to the dogmas promulgated by **Toth** and to the tale engrafted upon them



by Moses, they never considered God otherwise than a being having parts like themselves; about the period that Jesus was said to have commenced preaching, they were divided into various sects, some believing one dogma some another; some were materialists others immaterialists; Jesus (if there ever was such a man) and his disciples, clearly avowed the principles of Pythagoras, as they respected the divinity, distinctly declaring that GOD IS A SPIRIT; from that time the Christians have held to this dogma.

The Materialists, on the contrary, not only deny the possibility that any being can exist, that is not composed of some parts of the elements of matter; but also discredit the existence of any *almighty designing* power; like Darwin, the Theologian, they speculate deeply upon the powers and properties of nature to produce a living being, and by production and re-production, of improving the species: yet it must be confessed, that though they do thus argue comparatively upon the properties of, and rationally do conclude that, NATURE is all sufficient, by the processes of the elements of producing all the effects we behold, without the interposition of a *designing* power; it is fair and just to acknowledge, and all true philosophers and men of science will acknowledge, that the most safe and wise course for mankind to pursue is to argue *probatum est*, or from what they know, from the evidence if possible of their senses, or comparatively from things which are or have been known to exist, agreeable to the properties of nature and the laws of science; and taking for their guide observation and experience, to be content to acquire knowledge step by step and *pleno gradu ingredi*, as the properties of nature unfold themselves to the observing and inquiring mind; indeed all beyond is, I repeat, but conjecture and guess work; too uncertain for the philosopher to build a thesis on, or too uncertain for a man of sense to rest a hope on; this every person advanced but a little way on the knowledge of science, and the nature and reality of things knows to be the surest way to establish the truth of any position; demonstration proceeding from reality, being a thousand times more conclusive than the most plausible theory without such aid—for want of which the visionary theologians and reasoning or speculating theists make such blunders.

Revelation is nothing more than a tale told which depends entirely on probability, or the veracity, soundness of mind or judgment of the author or promulgator; and ought to be admitted with great caution, especially when any mystery attends it, or it is in any respect contrary to truth or the reality of things, which Dr. Darwin must have known, were the mysteries and miracles, and several of the circumstances related in the Christian Jew Books, and the dogmas of "sainted Paul." Yet could he prostitute his transcendent abilities, and cramp his powerful genius in lending himself to the deceptions which are practised upon the

untought and ignorant or unreflecting portion of mankind, and strange to say, none could more forcible pourtray the ill effects of superstition than himself, as may be seen in the following lines, and in his note which accompanies them:—

There the *curst spells of superstition* blind,  
And fix her fetters on the *tortured* mind;  
She bids, in dreams, tormenting shapes appear  
With shrieks that shock Imagination's ear.  
E'en o'er the *grave* a deeper *shadow* flings,  
And maddening conscience darts a thousand stings.

87 “Many *theatric* preachers among the Methodists successfully inculcate the fear of death and of hell, and live luxuriously on the folly of their hearers; those who suffer under this *insanity* are generally most innocent and harmless people, who are then liable to accuse themselves of the greatest imaginary crimes; and have so much *intellectual cowardice* that they *dare not reason* about those things, which they are directed by their priests to believe.

“Where this intellectual cowardice is great, the voice of reason is ineffectual; but that of ridicule may save many from these *mad-making doctors*, as the farces of Mr. Foot; though it is too weak to cure those who are already hallucinated.”

How extraordinary that they were also too weak to cure the religious mistakes of Dr. Darwin, implanted by the visionary or *theatric* preachers of some other sect; but in talking of the fear of death and hell, who that can really believe, or does really believe in all the horrible torments which the *theatric* preachers or any *other* sect of Christians describe the *damned* will suffer; and also really believe in that text of their sacred oracles which represents, that much the greatest portion of mankind have been and will be damned; I say, who that is so weak, as really to believe these things, is likely to have strength of mind sufficient fearlessly to meet death; but who that reads the above stanzas and the comment thereon *can believe* that Dr. Darwin, did not see through the *whole deception* which is, and has been, practised by priests of all religions. And that he wanted the intellectual courage or honesty either to hold his peace upon the subject, or to expose the whole of the deception practised by priests upon the ignorance and credulity of mankind.

That Darwin *believed* himself a friend of truth and of liberty, there can be little doubt, and that he was a humane, kind and benevolent man, there may be as little, but that he carried his notions of truth and liberty so far as to benefit the mass of mankind, to place the useful working people in a situation to secure their rights, interests, and privileges, we may fairly doubt; his writings were evidently designed for the libraries of the higher and respectable classes as the wealthy people stile themselves.

It seems extraordinary that great talents, great courage, and



great honesty, are rarely combined in the same person, Dr. Darwin no doubt possessed the first of these qualities; it does appear that he wanted intellectual courage and though he was a worthy and upright man, it certainly also appears, that he did not intend to write for the instruction of the useful classes; and therefore he truckled in my opinion to the prevailing prejudices and cant of the day, when with his masterly hand he might, in a few lines, have so exposed the benumbing and visionary dogmas of priests, and the madness of superstition, as to have rendered both odious to every rational mind.

So strong a hold has the delusive theories of theologians taken of the human mind, so firmly rooted are the prejudices arising from early impressions and instruction, so much influence have the priests, still over the most learned; coupling and interweaving as they do truth with falsehood; and as much do the learned still stand in awe of power; which at present supports the priests and their leading dogmas, that hitherto the Materialists have not had fair play; and though the properties and powers of nature have been ably explained and manfully supported, and the delusions of the priests have been ably and courageously exposed, still the advocates of nature and truth, have an arduous task to perform; but the age of delusion, cant, and hypocrisy is in the wane, and when the present deceptions are thoroughly exposed and grow stale, when they become (as ere long they will be) as ridiculous as the heathen mythology has become, and as Milton's *Paradise Lost*, helps to render them, (which is nothing more than a sublime satirical poem) I say, when the present religious delusions once become as ridiculous as those which have gone before them, and are now exploded; we may defy the knaves of the world to get up any other burlesque about divinities to bewilder, confuse, and distract mankind.

Philosophy, science, and the immortal press, will defeat all attempts again to hold in bondage the human mind by the threats of a *wrathful, hot, and consuming* God, or a tormenting and relentless devil. And instead of alarming mankind with threats of everlasting vengeance, will lead them to the exercise of the moral and benevolent feelings of their nature; and to the conquering of all their grosser, vindictive, and sordid passions.

What I have said in answer to I. G. may be considered merely as a few cursory remarks, for though it will occupy a space in your *Republican* much greater than is usual, in a limited and periodical publication; they are themselves limited in comparison to the discussion which the subjects contained in his letter admit of.

Were I to enter fully into the discussion of the supposed existence of an almighty designing power; upon the motions of the planets, and upon mineral life, and to quote all the authorities which could be adduced in favour of the opinions entertained by Materialists,

upon each and all these subjects, a large volume might be written; which would defeat your evident intention, of disseminating knowledge amongst the useful people; who are the parties most likely, and best calculated from their honest and plain dealings, to advance the real cause of nature, truth, and justice; independent of the spurious dogmas, sophistry, and puritanical cant which have obtained such a baneful and bewildering influence over the minds and manners of an immense majority of mankind, rendering them passive, imbecile, and submissive, and taken advantage of by an unprincipled, ambitious, and designing men, to subject the working people to their controul, and to filch from them much the largest portion of the fruits of their industry.

You Mr. Carlile, as a martyr of truth and free discussion, are an evidence that much remains to be done in removing from the human mind "the curst spells of superstition," until a much greater progress is made in the work of freedom and justice, I fear we shall continue to have our martyrs, for despotism, bigotry, and persecution, will be supported by the wealthy and powerful; until the useful classes are enlightened and have the judgment and virtue to make common cause, and a resolute stand against the cupidity of cabinets and the moral turpitude of crowned heads.

All now depends upon the courage, intelligence, unity, and moral worth of the people, I mean the working people, with hard hands and stout hearts, whether they become free, enjoy the fruits of their industry, and establish the principles of liberty, upon a firm basis; or remain the passive slaves of confederated and privileged oppressors: it is vain for individuals to appeal to them, unless they exercise their judgment and rational powers; it is in vain for individuals to stir unless the million are determined to move with them.

I remain, your obedient Servant,

JAMES WATSON.

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### LIBERTY AND NECESSITY.

*(From Burdon's Materials for Thinking, Vol. II.)*

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AMONG the many difficulties in the doctrines of religion, which have put faith and reason at variance, and puzzled even the most determined believers, that of reconciling the foreknowledge of God, with the free will of man is, without doubt, the most troublesome. Divines, philosophers, and poets, have tried to remove it, again and again, and left it



just where they begun; some honestly confessing that the narrowness of our comprehension is not equal to the difficulty, but that, no doubt, it will be cleared up to us in a future state, that is to say, when it will be of no use to us, if it is any thing more than a mere speculative enquiry. To cut the knot which cannot be untied, is a concise mode of arguing, not much suited to the inquisitive spirit of the present times, and savors, perhaps, a little of the arbitrary decisions of former ages, when men who could not give a reason for a thing, contented themselves with assuming the point in dispute, and thus silencing all argument by saying, "It is so; but why, I do not know." On this subject I will imitate the laconic brevity of former disputants, but will not content myself with merely giving an answer; I will endeavour to find some reasons to support my opinion. I answer, "It is not so, and I will tell you why:" foreknowledge and free will *cannot* exist together, and to maintain it is just as ridiculous as to say that two and two make five, or that two opposite signs in algebra do not destroy each other. If there is such a being as an omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent Deity, who created the universe, there cannot be in that universe any other being who has the power to act freely and independently; for if God is omniscient he must know every action of man before it is performed; if he is omnipotent, no being can have a power of doing any action contrary to his will; for if he could, such a being would in that instance be his superior; his omnipresence is only a consequence of the two former attributes. But if there is no such being as God in the world, then some men think that we must be free. What do they mean by free? Free to act without rule and controul? There can be no such thing. The material world we see is governed by fixed and invariable laws, and is the mind of man less subject to restraint? Are there no rules by which the conduct of rational beings is regulated? No such things as motives by which a man is impelled to choose one thing in preference to another?

Supposing the world to be governed by a supreme intelligent Being, let us enquire whether he acts by fixed or variable laws, whether by a general or a particular Providence. To imagine that the Maker of the universe (if such a being exists independent of matter), either did not, or could not, foresee, when he formed it, every possible contingency, and that he did not so dispose the laws of matter and mind as to produce the effects he intended, without the necessity of perpetual interference, is to derogate from his wisdom and his

power; it is a doctrine which must have originated from a very little mind, but has been believed by many great ones, and being the doctrine of the English church, has found many advocates among men of the first-rate talents, but all the talents in the world are not sufficient to make it credible with any one who considers it as applied to God instead of man; to the one it is degrading and insulting, to the other it is flattering and consolatory. The heathens personified these imaginary interferences, and had divinities for every place and every circumstance; and this is the whole secret of the heathen mythology, it is a personification of human qualities, of the operations of nature, or the events of the world. Minerva is wisdom, Æolus is wind, Mars is war, Saturn is time, which eats up its own children, and Jupiter is the air, and he (as well as all the other gods), is subject to Fate or Necessity, which is considered as unalterable, and inexorable. Moses, the first lawgiver, who ever ventured to promulgate the unity of the Deity, laid claim to his particular protection for the nation of the Jews, in exclusion of all the rest of mankind, and no doubt the success and continuance of his religion and laws is principally owing to this pious fraud; but every page of his writings which makes the Deity a party to the massacres and murders of the Jewish nation, which supposes him to reject and harden other nations or individuals, is inconsistent with those ideas which we form of an omnipotent and benevolent ruler of the universe. And yet every part of the Jewish and Christian religions supposes the interference of a particular Providence, because each of them lays claim to a particular revelation. They may indeed, in one sense, be said to come from God, and so do plagues, pestilence, and famine; they are parts of the general system, but as to their being particular interpositions, to the exclusion of other religions, or other nations, the idea is impious and ridiculous, and nothing but the narrow sectarian spirit of bigotry could have countenanced and supported such a belief. Are the Persians or the Chinese less the creatures of the Deity than the Jews or the Christians? If he did not communicate to them the means of obtaining his favour, will he punish them for not believing what they had no opportunities of knowing? If he does not punish them, where is the use or benefit of these revelations? And if he only rewards them according to knowledge, is he not partial in the distribution of his kindness? The notion of a particular Providence then, as it relates to nations, is blasphemous, and not less so with regard to individuals. To suppose that the Deity suffers a man to



be brought into a difficulty, and then steps in to help him out, is little less than ludicrous; yet we have been seriously told, that such a man was saved from shipwreck, storm, or fire, by a particular interposition of Providence. The very words are a contradiction to each other, for Providence comes from the Latin word *provideo*, which signifies to foresee, in the limited sense as applied to men; but in its higher application to the Divinity, means to foresee every thing; now if the Deity foresaw the man's falling into the difficulty, he must, without doubt, have foreseen the means of extricating him, and have produced both by a regular train of causes and effects, or his knowledge and his power are limited. In all those instances of sudden preservation, the attention of observers is caught by the nearness between danger and death, and that seems to be something more than natural, which is nothing but the operation of cause and effect, and if they will but allow that it is not miraculous, the wonder ceases; for that one man should be saved in a shipwreck, by laying hold of a plank, requires no further interposition of Providence, than that the rest should be drowned, if the plank could save but one; if it had saved a hundred, then he might be said to have interfered, and to have worked a miracle, for such is the only meaning, which we ought to give to a particular Providence.

That the Deity, every now and then, interposes in human affairs, that he favours particular sects and nations, and that he hardens the hearts of some that he may shew the greater kindness to others, is a notion which could have originated only from a weak or an artful mind; yet such has, in most ages, been the opinion of mankind, derived not, indeed, from the free exercise of reason, but the arbitrary controul of a few individuals, who have, in all nations, directed the public opinion for their own interested ends, and caused it to be believed that the government of the world is only a government of expedients, and that the Deity continually interposes his power for private and particular purposes. Even supposing the universe to be governed by an omnipotent and omniscient Being, the existence of such a Being is incompatible with human liberty, and if there is no such Being independent of Matter, the supposition is equally untenable.

If the laws which regulate matter are fixed and invariable, why are not those of mind, supposing them to result from the same organization, and if this be allowed, then it follows that there is no such thing as liberty opposed to these laws, and that we seem to be free only because we have the pow-

er to deliberate, but that our choice is constantly influenced by a motive, and that motive by a series of causes which are lost in eternity, as a watch appears to go by itself, till we understand the mechanism by which it is put in motion. To this opinion many and powerful objections will doubtless be raised; first it will be said to strike at the root of all morality, by inducing men to believe that as they have not the power to avoid doing evil, they may indulge themselves in every species of wickedness. Are there none who do this without believing in necessity? and may not men equally believe themselves impelled to do good? The fallacy of this argument lies in not giving the opposite opinion its full extent, for the principles of morality, which are either implanted by nature or acquired by imitation and habit, are as much a part of the general system of the moral world, as those propensities and temptations to vice which seduce or impel others, and no motive can operate upon man which is not the result of natural causes; therefore we are just as safe from the dangers of vice under the belief of necessity, as if every man believed himself a free agent. Next it will be said, that man's own feelings are a direct contradiction to the belief of his actions not being free; "we know," says some one, "that every action we perform is either the result of deliberation or perform is either the result of deliberation or of a violent temptation, but in both these cases we feel that the mind is equally free:" True it is that we seem to have the power of choosing, because when two things are proposed to us, we must take the one or the other, and at one period of time they seemed indifferent, and even after our choice, we think we had the power to have chosen the reverse; but this is fallacious, for we acted from the motive which was strongest at the time, and that motive was only the result of impressions, which arise as much from the mechanism of the mind, as seeing does from that of the eye; these motives impelled us to act, as much as the heavier weight inclines the balance; so that we might just as well say we might have acted differently, as say that if the lighter weight had been the heavier it would have turned the balance. As to actions that are trifling, the power to deliberate is so frequently exercised, that in time it ceases to be perceived; in these we seem to act with a greater degree of freedom, but in reality there is not the least difference. Popularly speaking, we are moral and accountable agents, actuated by motives and governed by hopes and fears, but philosophically speaking, we are mere machines, impelled by a power of which we have no knowledge, nor even any



conception. It suits very well, the loose and gross ideas of the vulgar, to personify that power and call it God, but men of deeper reflection consider the whole universe but as one immense machine, which is self-existent and has existed from all eternity. To examine this matter accurately, let us ask what is this mighty independent faculty which puts us out of the power of Nature, subjects the world to our dominion, and futurity to our choice? A mere operation of the mind exercised upon the objects of perception or sense; for what more is the will? and if the mind is a part of the universal system, its operations must be subject to the general laws of matter. According to the system of necessity, vice is no more in our own power, than virtue; we act in both cases under the impressions which certain objects make upon our senses, and these senses move our desires, desires operate on the will, and the will produces the action: the rectitude or depravity of any man's conduct, therefore, depends on the impressions which he receives in his youth; for these impressions, frequently repeated, become habits, and form the character of the man: hence will be seen the necessity of a virtuous education. Let no man be alarmed at the idea of his being a mere machine, for at any rate he is not of his own making, and, therefore, has no more right to claim a liberty of action, than the right of making himself; he can do nothing which is not intended by a superior power, and, therefore, he need not fear being impelled to vice by an irresistible propensity, for if such is the will of Providence, it is not in his power to resist, though he may suffer for his imprudence: I will not venture to maintain, that whatever is, is right, but I will affirm, that it cannot be otherwise than it is. The origin of our errors seems to be in the doctrine of a future state, for if the mind of man is not free, he cannot be the subject of reward or punishment; but this doctrine, invented and supported by priests and legislators to keep men in subjection to their power, having been established long before men began to think of themselves or the world around them, they united foreknowledge or the established order of things with free will, which if they had reasoned more accurately, they would have found could not exist together.

From all that has been said, it must follow that Nature or God, or whatever it is that keeps the world in motion, does not act by partial and temporary laws, that his government is not a government of expedients, for unforeseen occasions, and that we are mere agents of a superior power. To what consequence does this doctrine lead? To nothing worse than what we are subject to a fixed and invariable prin-

ciple by which the world from all eternity has been regulated, and if it is right that one man should be vicious and another virtuous, it is so disposed because it could not be otherwise, and we can no more disturb the order of the universe than a mite or a snail. Let us then submit with resignation to the state of things which is established, from a consciousness of its inevitable necessity: this does not forbid the exercises of human virtues or wisdom, nor can it prevent or increase the operation of vice, for both are parts of the same system. Men whose delicacy, or whose piety, is shocked at the idea of making what they please to call God the author of evil, are forced to vindicate his goodness, at the expence of his power, and raising up another, or a rival power, whom they term the Devil, make him the cause of all moral evil, while God is only the author of good. A notion so childish could have originated only in the infancy of the world, when men never reasoned on the nature of things, but believed implicitly all they were told, and when priests were the only repositories of knowledge, and knowledge was derived from any thing but reasoning and experience.—Should these opinions be true, they can do harm; if false, not more than others have which are yet believed; but it is expected probably, that they should be shewn capable to produce good. First, then, they strike at the root of all bigotry and superstition, regarding all systems of religion as the invention of men, they teach resignation to the events of the world, as the result of an inevitable necessity, but while they enforce resignation, they by no means prevent exertion. We are as much formed to submit to tyranny at one time, as to resist at another; one man is born to create corruption, and another to remove them; Martin Luther was as much an instrument in the hand of Fate as Gregory the Great, or Innocent II.—Finally, these, opinions limit the virtues or the exertions of man no farther than they are limited by our nature, and as they teach us that every action of our lives, and every event of the world, is the result of an established order of things, they tend to make us more truly moral than any system of superstition, which by continually calling the attention to its pretended author or to external ceremonies, withdraws our thoughts from the practice of virtue, and substitutes faith for morality. It is impossible for us to say what we are commanded or what we are forbidden to do by necessity, therefore we have no business to enquire, we have only to inquire how far the general interest agrees with our own. Men who believe in a God, too often take upon them to interpret his will; they



say that God hardens men's hearts, that he punishes nations and individuals, and that he visits the sins of the fathers upon the children. When considered as the operation of natural causes and effects, these opinions can do no harm; but when pretending to proceed from a knowledge of the divine will, they are convenient instruments for fraud and villainy to work with upon human credulity, and tend to keep mankind in subjection to a gross and degrading superstition. The idea of a God endowed with human passions and feelings, as the God of every religion is, the most complete bar to human improvement that could have been conceived—because when men make their own minds the standard of the Deity, and imagine that Being all excellent to whom they attribute the lowest of human infirmities, those infirmities will constantly find an apology in the conduct of a "jealous God,"\* a God of vengeance†, and a God that makes the innocent suffer the punishment of the guilty‡. All ideas of a God derived from human nature are degrading and ridiculous, and my reason will not suffer me for a moment to believe in such a Being. If by God a vital spirit, that active principle, which moves the whole mass of matter, God is the *anima mundi*, or soul of the world—that I understand, but if by the term God is meant a spiritual Being distinct from matter, endowed with human faculties to an infinite extent, that I cannot understand, and therefore cannot believe.

\* Exod. 20, ver. 5. † Deut. 32. Rom. 12, ver. 19. ‡ Rom. 5, ver. 8, 9, 10. ver. Strabo, lib. 7, p. 456. Ed. 1707.

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TO MR. R. CARLILE, DORCHESTER GAOL.

DEAR SIR,

Millbridge, July 31, 1823.

If you think the following letter worth insertion in "The Republican" you may insert it; if not, do not. It is rather too long, but I could not cut it shorter.

JAMES PENNY.

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TO THE REVEREND REUBEN HERNSHAW,  
KIRKBURTON.

I was an infant when my mother went  
To see an Atheist burned. She took me there.  
The dark-robed priests were met around the pile,  
The multitude was gazing silently;  
And as the culprit passed with dauntless mien,  
Tempered disdain in his unaltering eye,

Mixed with a quiet smile, shone calmly forth :  
 The thirsty fire crept round his manly limbs ;  
 His resolute eyes were scorched to blindness soon ;  
 His death pang rent my heart ! the insensate mob  
 Uttered a cry of triumph, and I wept.  
 Weep not child ! cried my mother, for that man  
 Has said, There is no God.

QUEEN MAB.

REVEREND SIR,

HEARING that you were going to prove the being of a God metaphysically, on Sunday the 20th of July, at the Methodist Chapel, Dewsbury, curiosity drew me to hear you ; and hearing your matchless ignorance and intolerance has induced me to address the following remarks to you, upon your sermon of that day ; of which I took as many notes as I thought necessary. I understand that you were asked to publish it, but you declined ; had you published it, I should have waited its appearance before I had made my remarks ; but, as you will not, I must make the best I can of what I have got. Had you been nobler game, I should have pursued you with greater alacrity ; but such as you are, you deserve a chastisement from some one ; and I know of no Materialist, higher than myself, who will stoop to give one, you must, therefore, receive it at my hands. I will take the heads of your sermon, singly, as you stated them ; the text of which is "The fool has said in his heart there is no God."

The first of your propositions was that : "the Atheist is a fool because he denies a truth established by universal evidence." Why, if he denies such a "truth" as this he is a "fool"! But it is first necessary to settle what we mean by the word "God." If you mean by it, that there is a power capable of producing whatever has been produced, we shall agree, and I need not say more. But by the word "God" you mean, according to the minor proposition in your second general proposition, an infinite, immaterial, indivisible, independent, unchangeable something, that existed prior to matter, and that caused matter to exist. But, then, is this an "evident" truth? Is it "evident" that something infinite exists, when there is something exists besides it ; and does not matter exist? Is it "evident" that immateriality is infinite in extension, and not extended at all? Is it also "evident" that it is indivisible because every thing is in constant motion in it? And is it "independent" because it cannot cease to exist, nor could be the cause of its own existence, consequently exists without its own consents? Is it "evident," that because every thing is in continual change that the cause of the change is unchangeable? I say, "wise" Mr. Hernshaw, are they "fools" who deny such things as these? Are they "fools" who cannot believe both a proposition, and its contradiction? Or are they barefaced, unblushing, impudent "fools" who think we are to be stultified with the excrements of their disordered brains in this manner? And, moreover, is it "evident" that we are the work



of an all-good Being, when we see such a mass of evil in the world? Byron says, and says truly, "goodness would not make evil, and what else hath he made?" But this Byron is a "fool"! From what has been said it will be "evident," that you are a "fool" or you would not have debased the dignity of wisdom by saying that such "evident" contradictions as these "are evident truths"! It seems, that something exists that is "evident;" and because your shallow capacity cannot trace it in its "secret source" you cry "it is evident that it has been created," and then, you endow a subject as a creator with all the negative properties, before you have proved the existence of that subject. Is it evident that matter has been created, because it is indestructible? Is it "evident" that it did not once occupy space, because it now does? Is it also "evident" that it has been created, because there is nothing known to exist besides it, nor independent of it, consequently nothing to create it? I say again, are all these things so evident that we are all "fools" that do not believe them? Or, is it you, Mr. Hernshaw, "wise" Mr. Hernshaw, that are a "fool," an incorrigible "fool," to have the effrontery to stand in your "tub," to promulgate such contradictions as these for "evident" truths?

I go now to your second proposition, which is, that "the Atheist is a fool because he denies a truth established by incontrovertible arguments." What occasion there is for "arguments" after evident truths I know not; perhaps you do; but if you had tried "arguments" first, and they had failed, your evident truths would have come in well. Your first "unanswerable argument" is, that the first cause must be indivisible, because if divisible, there would be an infinite number of self-existent beings, which is a contradiction." Where is the contradiction? Why is it not as possible for an infinite number of self-existent beings to exist at once? Your argument of their contending, and destroying each other, is a monstrosity that I could not have expected, even from you! What, an eternally existent being be destroyed! this is sublime indeed, and they must be "fools" that do not believe! But, do not the phenomena agree with a variety of self-existent beings? And may not all the various existences result from their acknowledged action on each other? For from one infinite eternal being it is evident they could not result; because, if it were infinite, there would not be any thing for it to act upon but itself; and, an eternally existent being cannot change its mode of existence; because, if it could, it would then become the cause of its new mode of existence, which would convey this contradiction, that it acted before it existed. Consequently, as it could not be the cause of its own mode of existence, it could not contract itself, or cease to be infinite, so as to make a vacuum or *negation* of itself upon which to act. Therefore, if it did act at all, it must act upon itself, and the production of matter would imply this glaring contradiction, that an homogeneous body, act-

ing upon itself, had produced an heterogeneous body! And, again, if it be infinite in extension, it cannot be indivisible; for whatever has extension may be divided into parts of its extension, and if it be not infinitely extended, it is bounded by something; consequently not infinite. Besides, the existence of matter destroys its infinity; without you fall into this absurdity, that an infinite being can admit something to exist along with it, and still be infinite; which I should be "fool" enough to think you can hardly "swallow"! for by that kind of reasoning, it is possible that we might have an infinite number of infinitely extended beings; which is an absurdity, greater, beyond comparison, than the supposition of an infinite number of eternal beings. I am perfectly aware of the contradiction in an "*infinite number*," but it is the best way we have of expressing ourselves. *Eternal duration* carries the same contradiction with it. What you said respecting its independence, is fully answered in a preceding paragraph, in these words "is it independent because it cannot cease to exist; nor cause itself to exist; consequently exists without its own consent," therefore not independent.

Your next "unanswerable argument" is, that "the eternal being must be unchangeable." Now I dare say that you recollect using this same argument at a meeting at Kirkburton; and I dare say, that you recollect my being there; and, I dare say, that you recollect a letter that I sent soon after to "The Republican" upon the subject now in hand; and you likewise know, I dare say, that that letter fully answered this "unanswerable argument" of yours, and contained a challenge for any one to refute it. And yet you, Reverend Sir, knowing all these things, have the unblushing impudence to ascend the "tub" and endeavour to promulgate it, as an unimpeachable truth. How to account for this I am at a loss, except on the score of insensibility, that is, that you are so badger-hided that the lash, lightly laid on, you cannot feel, but persevere in your old onward way, as though no obstacle had been thrown in your way. It being your peculiar talent to jump over, what would break an ordinary man's neck! However, I will quote that letter, in answer to this "unanswerable argument" of yours. It is as follows "it has likewise been triumphantly urged by Mr. Law, that matter is subject to continual change, therefore cannot be eternal." Let us try their supposed Deity upon their own hypothesis. Let us endeavour to suppose a time (though it is impossible for us to suppose one) when no matter existed; that is, that this immateriality existed alone; consequently there must have been an eternity, without any thing but this immateriality. Supposing this to be the case, it might, thus far, be fairly said to be unchangeable; but then, the moment it begun to create, or to think about creating matter, it must change, or be different from what it was in the eternity that preceded this creating, or thinking to create matter; and when it came to create the varieties of matter, it must change as often as there are varieties. Letting



alone the absurdity of a change without a *cause* for that change; for if it existed alone there could not be a cause, unless it had an eternal *cause* within itself of being different from what it eternally was, which is a contradiction. But if they say there could be such, what was it? Can an homogeneous body give variety of sensations to itself? Or, rather, can it have sensations at all, if it exist alone? I say no; therefore, to cause it to change, there must have existed some other independent body, (independent of it) or there could not possibly have been any change. So we see that their own hypothesis of unchangeability destroys the eternity of their own phantom! Besides matter does not change *positively*. Let us suppose a particle of matter at rest, and all the varieties of matter floating incessantly round it; it will be seen at once, that as every variety of matter came in contact with it, it would be in a different *relative* position, (or, mode of existence) but not in a *positive* one, for it would not have changed one *positive mode* of its existence. It is the same if it be in motion; a particle of *oxygen* will not become carbon (or any other variety) though it undergoes millions of *relative* changes, consequently will not have changed one positive mode of existence. Now why did not you answer this before you prated in the manner you did? Even allowing that you did not see this, why did it not suggest itself? Perhaps your author did not examine it, consequently you could not. But it appears to me that you had seen it, because you made some kind of a prattle about *relatives* and *positives*, which was quite a novelty to hear from you; and certain I am that you did not understand them, or you would not have used them in the manner you did; for, in speaking of the changeability of matter, you say: "as it (matter) came in contact with every other kind of matter, it would be in a different relative position, therefore, it would depend upon the other kinds of matter for its relative mode of existence, consequently, for existence itself!" There! a cage for the wild man! Let him be exhibited at all wakes and fair! Let a full-length picture be drawn as a sample! and over it the following inscription: "The wonderful half-reasoning animal from Borneo; who can repeat syllogisms by heart, and which you would actually think he formed, only sometimes he tries, and then he shows how frail are all his attempts compared with that 'favourite of heaven'—man!" I cannot paint you half ridiculous enough! The maddest trick of mad Quixote, was deliberate wisdom compared to this! His renowned battle with the wind-mills—his encounter with the flock of sheep—and his chivalrous exploits to attain the barber's bason, are nothing compared to this trick of yours; because they were all done for the love of his dear Dulciàna; and what will not men do for love? You having out-metaphysicked metaphysics as he out-chivalried chivalry, is unaccountable only on the score of the *love*, you bear to your dear "immortality;" which, by the bye, is more wonderful than that of our renowned knight's to his dear Dulciàna, for she was

describable; but your "darling" is a nondescript! Yet, it sticks in my throat like "Macbeth's amen;" I cannot "swallow" it. When I was placed in a different relative mode of existence by your reverend self ascending the "oratorial tub," was I dependent upon you for positive existence? I say, Reverend Sir, was I? And are we all fools that do not believe such unanswerable arguments as these? You also said something about mechanical necessity, and the eternity of man; but there being a little noise with a child in the pew where I sat, I could not catch what you said. I have been at a friend of yours to enquire if he knew, but he could not recollect. I know the arguments that are used upon this subject, but I do not know your precise words; so I shall be obliged to leave this part unexamined. You will perhaps tell us something about it some other time.

Your arguments against chance, are just what the advocates of it would use in favour of it. I would advise you, to consider the general bearing of propositions, before you use them; but this you never seem to do; if it is for the moment, it will do for you; you never consider whether the tables can be turned upon you or not.

I was likely to have forgotten your argument about design, but it is such a stale thing, that you did not seem to build much upon it, because we must have something prior to the designer, wherefrom to take his ideas; and likewise, he has them to acquire; besides designing or contriving shows a want of wisdom in the contriver, otherwise, he could do without contrivance. It supposes the existence of materials as well as prototypes to perform his designs upon; but what is worst of all, the tables are so easily turned upon you! I will just quote a passage from the abovementioned letter, to shew you how easy it is to turn them upon you. "But then, pray Mr. Paley, do you call this stating the argument fairly? When we have got to "your designer" of the watch are we to be satisfied? Does not your "contriver" also want a "contriver" for himself? Or, is he to have "contrivance" without being "contrived"? Is he to have "design" without having something prior to him, to have given him those properties of "designing"? If not, would not this be "contrivance" without a "contriver"? which, according to your own hypothesis, is impossible. Why did not you see this, or if you did, why not settle it? I ask you, why not settle it? The existence of motion and organization, are occult qualities, with which we shall, perhaps, never be acquainted, nor does it ease the burthen, by reasoning the case, from matter or immateriality; if it be insupportable in the one case, it is more so in the latter. If you ask me how matter can do these things, I reply, without shame, I do not know. If I ask you how immateriality does these things, you will reply, you do not know. What difference, then, is there between us here? If you use arguments that we can turn upon you, as in the above case, you are still no better; and we have the existence of matter proved, but you have



not immateriality proved, which makes us as far above you, as real existence is above ideal! Therefore you must proceed to shew that there is existence independent of matter, for if there be no existence independent of matter, there cannot be any properties independent of it; and when you have proved that there is existence independent of matter, we will reason about their relative properties. Where you see effects that you cannot account for, what does that prove? It proves nothing but that you are ignorant of the causes; and do you account for it better by saying, that it is immateriality? No; but because you do not know how matter causes the different motions, &c. You are ashamed to own your ignorance, and cry out, it is "immateriality that caused it;" before you know that immateriality exists! We, or I, deny its existence, and challenge you to prove it; and until you can, for ever cease your senseless jargon about it.

Your third proposition is, that "the Atheists deny a truth confirmed by universal testimony," how could you dare to bring this forward, and then invalidate it immediately, I cannot tell; but as you invalidated it yourself, I shall have no occasion to spend any time upon it. I will just state, that if the greatest amount of testimony be taken, the God, or Gods of the universe, will be found to be material.

Your fourth proposition is, that the "Atheists deny a truth fraught with the greatest advantages." With regard to its truth, we have seen how fallacious its evidence is, and its advantages I will show to be fallacious too. What you wish to ground these advantages upon is, the responsibility which man affects to a God, and that if there were no responsibility to God there would be no morality. If there was no responsibility to any one, there would neither be morality nor immorality; for morality, is nothing more than a responsibility which a man feels to his neighbour for every bad action that he may commit towards him; thinking that he would not like his neighbour to do the same by him. This is individual morality, and forms the basis, or should do of national morality, or justice. Therefore as I said before, if there was no responsibility to any one, there would be morality, or immorality, that is, if there was no one but himself to be injured or benefitted, by his bad, or good actions, he could not be considered immoral; he might be imprudent but not immoral; for the idea of morality is responsibility to some one for our actions. When a man enters society he gives up the individual right of punishing those that injure him, to that society acting in conjunction, because the whole society is supposed to be injured, by the injury done to one of its members; consequently, it is their interest to take efficient measures to obtain compensation for the injured individual, and to punish the offender, as a terror to others. Consequently, it will be seen, that in order to fix responsibility to any thing, it will be necessary to prove its existence and that it can return him good, or evil, in proportion as he acts towards it. For

ideal and distant punishments, have never yet been sufficient to restrain crime in any shape; if they had, we should have no occasion for human laws; and what country, ever yet, trusted solely to punishments after death? Do not we see crimes committed by men, under the double terror of punishment here and hereafter, who, if you was to tell them there was no God, or no hereafter, would abuse you with every kind of opprobrious epithets, and perhaps with blows. Which then is the greatest incentive to morality; real, or ideal punishment? What is more common than to hear people say "if we had no laws we could not live;" and at the same time believe in future punishments. But still, it seems that the real punishments are uppermost in their minds, consequently would have the greatest restraint upon their conduct.

But, independent of all other things, what has been a greater curse to society than the name of "God?" "the name of God" says Shelly "has fenced about all crime with holiness!" It has been the watchword of death and desolation—of every thing that humanity shudders at ever since we have records! The mad ambition of individuals, has sometimes distracted a country but the name of God has been the pretext for ravaging the world! Look at what has been done by Rome! Look at the butcheries that were committed in South America; which were begun and carried on, under that horrible name! "He treats the Bible with contempt" was the cry of the bloody monster that had entered their peaceful dominions; and instantly cried—"havoc and let slip the dogs of war!" Old and young promiscuously perished, by this monster vested with the name of God!

You call our attention to that bugbear the French revolution, and the cruelties committed by a Robespierre and a Danton; but what are their cruelties compared with the Spanish butcheries in South America? What are their cruelties compared to what has been suffered in every country under Christianity and the inquisition, under which, in one country, and under one man, eighty thousand were brought to trial, and six thousand of which were burnt at a stake for the glorious name of God! This country was Spain! O ye Nero's! and ye Caligula's! What are your enormities to these! And such have been the scenes in every country where that glorious name has been heard! Besides, where did you learn that Robespierre and Danton were Atheists? Look at one of Danton's speeches, where he says, "we did not strive to annihilate superstition for the sake of establishing the reign of Atheism;" and on his condemnation he said he "implored pardon of God and men for what he had done!" The usual manner of covering every enormity; to attribute them to our evil nature and then "pray to God" to pardon them! And do not we find Robespierre himself denominating one party as Atheists and destroying them? What, but calculating upon one of the most stupid, the most ignorant, of audiences; or else your own consummate ignorance could have



induced you to represent such men as these as Atheists; who were in all probability Christians? Besides, do not you know that it was the English cry of "God and our religion" that caused these sanguinary proceedings in France? Was it not the cry of the ministry, the parliament, the press, and the pulpit, that we must go to war to keep the "Atheistical French" from coming and "deposing our altar and our throne?" In short, was it not the cry of the majority of the nation; and was not the effigy of that celebrated Theist, Paine, burnt thousands, and thousands of times, because he could not believe in three Gods? In short the people thought that this was the real ground; (though the ministry knew that it was not) for going to war, that is, to defend an almighty God from the Atheistical French! And which war has cost this country more than a million of lives, and two thousand million of money and which has reduced this country, and the sister kingdom, to the lowest ebb of civilized society—that has caused more crime, more misery, more bloodshed, and starvation, by ten thousand times, than all the crimes committed by all the Atheists that ever existed; and all in the short space of twenty-five years! All this has been done in the name of God, a name which you say, is fraught with the "greatest advantages!" And we are to be called "fools" and "nuisances" to "society," because we do not believe such things as these, are the "greatest advantages!" What ever is a nuisance to society ought to be mended, or destroyed; beginning with the greatest first; and which is the greatest the "name of God," or the Atheist? Which has produced and is producing the greatest calamities to mankind? Is it a greater "nuisance to society" that Atheists should exist in a country, than the immolating of thousands of men, in a day, under the chariot wheels of Juggernaut? Is it a greater calamity that they should exist, than the overrunning of society in Spain by one hundred thousand Frenchmen, under the banner of the "God of St. Louis," and all the horrors of war attendant upon it? Is it a greater calamity than the massacre of Christians by the faithful Mahometans, and the massacre of Mahometans, by the faithful Christians? Is it a greater calamity than the offering up the flower of the youth in a country, to be burnt as a sacrifice, for the appeasing of their Gods," which youth, should become the bulwark of its future improvement? I say, Reverend Sir, is the existence of a few Atheists in a country greater "nuisances" than these? And I say, which, contemptible inquisitor, ought to be first destroyed? And what proves more clearly that the Atheists are not these "immoral murderers," animals that you have represented them; I say what proves more clearly that they are not these, than your own existence after describing them in the manner you did? If all ties would be broken in a society of Atheists why are they not broken now? Is death more terrible now than in a society of Atheists? No; I say then, what proves more clearly, that they have moral ties, than your existence after insulting them in the manner you did?

Did you ever hear of Atheists persecuting, or pelting men to death or on the rack because they were not Atheists? Lord Bacon says, "Atheism leaves a man to sense, to philosophy, to natural piety, to laws, to reputation; all which may be guides to an outward moral virtue though religion were not, but Superstition dismounts all these; and createth an absolute monarchy in the minds of men; therefore Atheism never did perturb states; for it makes men wary of themselves as looking no farther, and we see the times inclined to Atheism (as the times of Augustus Cæsar) where civil times, but Superstition, hath been the confusion of many states, and bringeth in a new *primum mobile* that ravisheth all the spheres of Government." And Pope calls this Bacon the "wisest, brightest—of mankind! Now if Atheists are "fools" the man that speaks in their favour must be a greater fool than they! Then what must this Bacon be? but what must Pope be that praises him, that praise fools? they have got below my vocabulary, I cannot name them. But then what must you, Reverend Sir, be that have got so much wisdom as to call these men fools, O! I am astounded at your stupendous height, you must be a—I don't know what—a something.

"That paragon's description and wild fame;

One that excells the quirks of blazoning pens!"

But, perhaps, you will tell us, that it is the believing unworthily of God, that causes all the cruelties that have been committed in his name; why that is the very reason why they have butchered each other! each party believing that the other believed unworthily.

Your fifth and last proposition is merely, that the Atheists are deprived of the comforts of contemplating a future life. If these be comforts take them; we enjoy the reality, while you are grasping at the "unsubstantial bubble;" consequently lose the reality! I have not time to say more upon this at present. I must conclude, in your conclusion you say, after having said, that Atheists deny a truth established by unanswerable arguments; that all cannot agree with them! And then sagely advise them to pray! Pray to what? I challenge you to prove any thing worthy of prayer! and waiting for that proof, I remain, yours, &c.

JAMES PENNY.

#### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The Letter of a Republican with £5. is acknowledged. A translation of Dupuis will be obtained as early as possible and published. The Editor would have been happy to have seen the writer.

William Tunbridge acknowledges the receipt of £1. 17s. from a few Friends in Goodman's Fields, enemies to persecution.

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